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DE RUEHLM #0328/01 0580949
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O 270949Z FEB 07 CCY
FM AMEMBASSY COLOMBO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5526
INFO RUEHRL/AMEMBASSY BERLIN IMMEDIATE 0243
RUEHKT/AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU IMMEDIATE 4960
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE 3569
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI IMMEDIATE 0691
RUEHNY/AMEMBASSY OSLO IMMEDIATE 3658
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS IMMEDIATE 0118
RUEHRO/AMEMBASSY ROME IMMEDIATE 0386
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO IMMEDIATE 2738
RUEHCG/AMCONSUL CHENNAI IMMEDIATE 7459
RUEHBI/AMCONSUL MUMBAI IMMEDIATE 5174
RUEHON/AMCONSUL TORONTO IMMEDIATE 0116
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA IMMEDIATE 1845
RHEHAAA/NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
RHHMUNA/HQ USPACOM HONOLULU HI IMMEDIATE
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS IMMEDIATE
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC IMMEDIATE

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 COLOMBO 000328

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DEPARTMENT FOR SCA/INS AND DS/ICI/ITA

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [ASEC](#) [PTER](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [MOPS](#)

SUBJECT: ATTACK ON AMBASSADOR'S CONVOY IN BATTICALOA

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C O R R E C T E D C O P Y -- PARA 1 TEXT (DATE)

1. On February 27, 2007 Ambassador Blake and the German, Italian, Japanese and French Ambassadors accompanied Minister of Disaster Management and Human Rights Mahinda Samarasinghe and representatives of the United Nations and international non-governmental organizations on a day trip to observe developments in the Eastern Province of Sri Lanka. They departed Colombo for Batticaloa at approximately 0745 in a Sri Lankan Military MI 17 VIP helicopter.

2. At approximately 0845, as the helicopter approached the Batticaloa Air Force base, it was diverted to a nearby alternate landing site when the Air Force base came under mortar fire from the LTTE. After a normal landing, the party deplaned and moved toward waiting vehicles. Before the party could enter the vehicles, the landing site received several rounds of mortar fire, one of which impacted at the rear of the motorcade and another approximately twenty yards from Ambassador Blake. The party was placed in an armored personnel carrier and moved to the Batticaloa Police station.

3. During the attack, Ambassador Blake was hit in the shoulder by a flying object and received a superficial wound which produced a small quantity of blood. Several other members of the party received similar injuries. The Italian Ambassador had an object embedded in his neck and was taken to the Batticaloa Hospital for treatment; the German Ambassador, who was uninjured, accompanied him. Samarasinghe's spokesman confirmed that the Minister had not been injured, but said that a number of security force personnel were admitted to Batticaloa hospital with serious injuries.

4. DCM contacted Norwegian Ambassador Hans Brattskar and asked that he convey to the LTTE that diplomats had come

under fire and that LTTE in the area must cease shelling.
Ambassador Brattskar talked by phone with LTTE Peace
Secretariat head Puledevan and later with LTTE Commander for

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Batticaloa Jihan. They stated that the LTTE was unaware that
foreign diplomats were in the area and that shelling would be
halted.

15. LTTE military spokesman Irasiah Ilanthirayan issued a
statement via "Tamilnet" blaming the government for failing
to notify the LTTE of the diplomats' presence: "We are
shocked by the grave negligence of the security arrangements
for the diplomats by the Sri Lankan government that has
transported the delegation into the artillery launchpads amid
the prevailing atmosphere of provocative artillery attacks."

16. Foreign Minister Rohitha Bogollagama issued a statement
condemning the attack on diplomats: "The LTTE has once again
demonstrated its terrorist nature by launching an attack on
the Diplomatic Corps on their visit to Batticaloa, on the
east coast of Sri Lanka, on a humanitarian mission... These
areas have now been substantially cleared of the LTTE and the
resettlement of IDPs is taking place."

17. The Ambassador and the rest of the party received
scheduled briefings from military officials and civil society
representatives in Batticaloa and we expect to depart at
15:00 for Colombo.

18. Embassy briefed the Operations Center on the incident at
0930 and provided updates during the day.

19. Comment: It is possible, or even likely, that the LTTE
identified the aircraft as a Sri Lankan military helicopter
and attacked without knowing that diplomats and international
NGO representatives were on board since this model of
helicopter is the primary transport helicopter in the Sri
Lankan inventory.

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C O R R E C T E D C O P Y -- PARA 1 TEXT (DATE)

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